

BOROUGH OF OKEHAMPTON

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**ANNUAL REPORT**

OF THE

**Medical Officer of Health**

FOR THE

**YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1952**



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**PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF :**

Medical Officer of Health:

E. D. ALLEN-PRICE, M.D., D.P.H.

Borough Engineer and Sanitary Inspector:

R. A. BRUNSKILL, D.P., R.S.I.

Assistant to Sanitary Inspector:

E. FURSE



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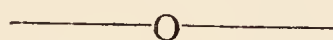
Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,

I beg to submit my annual report for the year ending 31st December 1952, in accordance with the Ministry of Health's instructions.

The general health of the Borough was good throughout the year and infectious disease and weekly sickness returns were below the average.

The population of the Borough according to the Registrar General's computation fell by 50 persons although the deaths only exceeded the births by one. This migratory tendency will only be checked when your Council adopt a positive policy to encourage the development of minor industries.

The birth rate is below that for England and Wales as one would expect with an ageing population, but apart from this the vital statistics compare very favourably with those for the Country as a whole, and the longevity of the inhabitants is once again exemplified by the table.



## SECTION—A.

### GENERAL STATISTICS

Area (statute acres) ... ..	786
Population—1931 Census ... ..	3,519
Population—1951 Census ... ..	3,897
Estimated Home Population—Mid 1952 ...	3,879
Number of Inhabited Houses ... ..	1,127
Rateable Value ... ..	£25,831
Product of Penny Rate ... ..	£101
Loan Debt ... ..	£78,339

### VITAL STATISTICS

	Male	Female	Total	
Live Births ... ..	25	23	48	
Legitimate ... ..	24	22		
Illegitimate ... ..	1	1		
				England & Wales
Crude Birth Rate per 1,000 population ...		12·4		15·3
Corrected Birth Rate ... ..		12·2		
Still Births ... ..		6		
Still Birth Rate per 1,000 live and still births ...		111·1		22·6
	Male	Female	Total	
Deaths ... ..	23	26	49	
Crude Death Rate per 1,000 population ...		12·6		11·3
Corrected Death Rate ... ..		10·1		
Deaths from Maternal Causes ... ..		1		
Maternal Mortality ... ..		18·5		0·72
Deaths of Infants under 1 year ... ..		1		
Infant Mortality ... ..		20·8		27·6



Year	Population	Birth Rate	Death Rate
1946	3,925	24·5	13·2
1947	3,952	23·0	15·5
1948	4,090	16·9	15·4
1949	4,020	15·4	16·4
1950	4,040	16·3	14·1
1951	3,929	12·7	15·3
1952	3,879	12·4	12·6



The chief causes of death were as follows:—

**Infectious Causes:**

Influenza ..... 1

**General Causes:**

Cancer ..... 12

Cerebral Vascular Disease ..... 11

Heart Disease ..... 9

Coronary Disease ..... 4

Arteriosclerosis ..... 1

Bronchitis ..... 1

Diabetes ..... 1

Maternal Causes ..... 1

Nephritis ..... 1

Suicide ..... 1

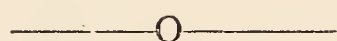
Homicide ..... 1

Other causes ..... 4

**Infants under 1 year:**

Intercranial Haemorrhage ..... 1

Total ..... 49



AGE OF DEATH TABLE

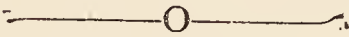
Age at Death	Male	Female
Infants under 1 year ... ..	1	—
1 - 5 years ... ..	—	—
5 - 15 years ... ..	—	—
15 - 25 years ... ..	—	—
25 - 35 years ... ..	—	1
35 - 45 years ... ..	—	1
45 - 55 years ... ..	2	1
55 - 65 years ... ..	2	3
65 - 75 years ... ..	11	10
75 and over ... ..	7	10
Totals ... ..	23	26

SECTION—B.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES.

The health services continued to work smoothly and a close liaison exists between the County Council officers and your Medical Officer of Health.

I would mention that the relationship of the family doctors practising in the Borough and district and the officers of the Regional Board with your Medical Officer is one of cordiality and mutual assistance. In fact at the professional level complete harmony exists. This fact makes the administrative hotch-potch under which we labour a workable reality.



SECTION—C.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Mr. Brunskill has submitted the following report on the sanitary circumstances of the Borough for the year:—

Water Supply.

Supplies at the intakes have been quite adequate throughout the year. The water is soft in character. At the Filter Station the peaty acids from the moor are neutralised and after filtration an adequate dose of hydrated lime is added.

RAINFALL: Rainfall records are taken at two points on the watershed and at the Filter Station. Returns are sent monthly to the Air Ministry Meteorological Offices. The 1952 figures were lower than the previous two years and were about average. Readings are taken monthly at Cranmere and Newbridge and daily at the Filter Station.

The following are the rainfall figures for the past 5 years:

	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948
Cranmere .....	77·65	92·18	91·00	66·50	92·80
Newbridge .....	72·60	79·00	79·10	61·95	76·66
Filter Station .....	58·24	65·00	62·13	44·40	56·55
Dry Days (no rain) ...	152	128	144	176	158

The driest months were February, July and June. and the wettest August, November, January and October in those orders. There were long dry spells of ten days average in February, May, June and July. On five days there were more than 1" falls. On August 15th (the date of the Lynmouth floods) the rainfall at the Filter Station here was 4·24". This is the highest ever recorded here.

INTAKE MAINS: Though within the Artillery danger zones, intake mains have again escaped serious damage and have functioned properly throughout the year. The boundary fencing was repaired and repainted, and Break Pressure valves were overhauled. Minor clearing of old supply pipes and land draining has been carried out on the abandoned works on the Okehampton Park Estate.

**FILTRATION AND TREATMENT:** The plant has been in continuous operation throughout the year. Minor intermittent faults were remedied by the attendant in daily attendance. Defects in the pressure filters permitting the passage of minute quantities of sand were referred to the filter manufacturers and on their recommendation the filters were dismantled, repaired and re-assembled by the Council's own staff. The whole of the sand was washed and re-graded before re-placement and new sand was obtained to replace losses.

Analyses of the water indicate it to be of satisfactory standard of purity both bacteriologically and chemically. One sample was taken for chemical and nine for bacteriological analysis. Of the latter, seven passed Class I and two Class 2. pH. values have been generally maintained at 7.0 to 7.4.

**DISTRIBUTION:** Mains were regularly flushed and leak inspections continuously carried out. Leaks were found and repaired on 36 Corporation service pipes, 5 Corporation mains of which 3 were completely fractured, and 37 consumer services. Considerable maintenance work in clearing service pipes, mainly by force pump was again carried out, no fewer than 72 services being treated in this way.

In the Klondyke H.L. area, mains were opened up for examination and found to be seriously obstructed by soft peaty incrustation. Work of scraping and clearing these mains was put in hand and was in progress at the end of the year by the Council staff.

Small temporary emergency supplies, transported by tank waggon, were provided on request for consumers in the adjoining rural district.

New service and supply pipes are now mostly being laid in copper tube in place of lead, and in nearly all cases stopcocks are fixed direct on the mains to obviate cutting off main supplies during repairs. New services have been provided for five existing properties, and two new private houses. A new 3" main with hydrant has been laid in Oaklands Drive.

### **Drainage and Sewerage.**

Repairs were carried out on the East and West river sewers after the storms of August 15th and an additional storm overflow was constructed at the Old Mill, North Street.

The enlarged sludge beds have been in operation throughout the year and have been most satisfactory.

Effluent standards have been well maintained and no complaints as to river pollution have been received.

### **Rivers and Streams.**

The East and West Ockment rivers are self-cleansing. Solid rubbish is periodically removed.

### **Swimming Pool.**

The Swimming Pool and Paddling Pool, both of which are supplied by continuous running water, have been well maintained and conducted. The pools are cleaned periodically during the season and lightly chlorinated.



## SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA

The following visits were carried out by your Inspector during the year:

Houses	...	...	...	...	...	34
Houses re. housing	...	...	...	...	...	75
Drainage	...	...	...	...	...	23
Water Closets	...	...	...	...	...	13
Sewerage	...	...	...	...	...	19
Water Supply	...	...	...	...	...	58
Rivers	...	...	...	...	...	8
Refuse Disposal	...	...	...	...	...	24
Salvage	...	...	...	...	...	12
Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	...	22
Refuse Disposal Tip	...	...	...	...	...	24
Tents and Vans	...	...	...	...	...	4
Schools	...	...	...	...	...	13
Infectious Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	—
Infestation	...	...	...	...	...	1
Rodents	...	...	...	...	...	2
Animals	...	...	...	...	...	8
Food and Meat Shops	...	...	...	...	...	147
Offensive Trades	...	...	...	...	...	8
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	...	19
Informal Notices	...	...	...	...	...	32
Remedied	...	...	...	...	...	31

### **Public Cleansing, Refuse Collection and Disposal.**

Refuse collection and disposal have been carried out by the Corporation, and weekly collections have again been maintained without interruption throughout the year.

Normal street cleansing is by orderly truck, and streets are also cleansed daily including Saturday afternoons and Sundays.

Refuse disposal is by regulated tipping on the Council's refuse tip where rodent control is carried out by the Council's own operator. In addition, the tip is regularly treated and sprayed with tip dressing for the

control of flies. This is done daily or two or three times a week as necessary and is most effective, so much so that even in dry hot weather the tip is kept completely free from flies.

Considerable quantities of trade refuse are also dumped on the tip.

Levelling of the tip to improve its shape is continually carried out, and gradually further accumulated scrap metal is being buried in.

More withies to thicken the screening hedge were planted during the autumn.

### **Salvage.**

Collection and disposal of salvage was continued regularly fortnightly, with additional collections weekly where required from business premises. The collection of domestic salvage was suspended as from June, and then in October, in response to appeals from the paper mills owing to overstocking, collections were entirely suspended. Waste paper was then disposed of with the refuse.

The Council was successful in winning a 5th Prize of £50 in the W.P.R.A. Competition with 51 tons, and would have easily obtained a 4th Prize had not pirate collectors taken the cream of the salvage during a large part of the year.

It is interesting to record that since the start of the salvage campaign, Okehampton has sent away enough tightly baled waste paper to fill a goods train of over 70 trucks.

The value of this work could again be counted not only in the substantial financial returns accruing from it, but also in the reduction in the bulk refuse in the bins, and the minimising of nuisance on the refuse tip. The gross receipts since the inception of the Borough Council Salvage Scheme were well over £3,000 in ten years, of which 51 tons to the gross value of nearly £800 was collected in 1951 and 28 tons worth £343 in 1952.

### **Rodent Control.**

In accordance with Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries requirements, rodent control has been in operation throughout the year with a part-time operator.

Block control has been carried out where necessary throughout the area to a progressively lessening extent, and at the refuse tip and sewage disposal works. In addition the whole of the sewers were tested in March and September, and the minimum of infestation was again evident.

The incidence of infestation in the area again continues to decline to desirable limits.

### Infectious Diseases and Disinfestation.

No premises needed to be disinfected or fumigated during the year. No cases of infectious disease had to be dealt with for the fifth year in succession.

Disinfestation treatment has been necessary in one case for flies.

### Smoke Abatement.

Three minor cases of smoke emission were dealt with by informal action.

### Fish Frying

There are two small fish frying shops, and one larger fish frying shop and café, which have been well conducted, no formal action being necessary.

### Offensive Trades.

At the two establishments, eight inspections were made.

### Factories Acts, 1937 and 1948.

#### 1.—INSPECTIONS:

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of		
		Inspection s (3)	Written Notices (4)	Occupiers Prose- cuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities ...	31	53	5	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority ...	12	12	—	—
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	9	9	—	—
TOTAL ...	52	74	5	—



## 2.—CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND:

Particulars (1)	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecu- tions were instituted (6)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	To H.M. Inspector (4)	Referred By H.M. Inspector (5)	
Want of Cleanliness ...	1	1	—	—	—
Overcrowding ...	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable Temperature ...	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate Ventilation ...	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors ...	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences : (a) Insufficient	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective ...	4	4	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes ...	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences ...	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL ...	5	5	—	—	—

### National Assistance Act 1948—Section 47.

No action was necessary under Section 47 of the National Assistance Act 1948, during the year.

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### SECTION—D.

#### HOUSING

**REPAIRS:** Individual defective houses were inspected and 5 were rendered fit by informal action.

**MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS:** During the year normal minor maintenance repairs were carried out as necessary in very small numbers on both pre-war estates at Macey's Terrace and Brayhams Terrace, and post-war Savile Mead Estate, on the Lower Brayhams and Brickfield temporary housing estates, and to the 14 requisitioned units. The repainting of the exterior of Brayhams Terrace houses was carried out during the latter part of the year.

In all cases of change of tenancy, houses are thoroughly cleansed, re-decorated and repaired as necessary before the new tenant enters.

In new construction works on the Savile Mead Estate, two further "U" houses were completed early in the year and in June work on the 20 houses and 12 flats was commenced. These consist of 6-2 bedroom houses, 11-3 bedroom houses, 3-4 bedroom houses, and 12-2 bedroom flats. They are all traditional and in blocks of four. At the end of the year all 32 units were in course of erection. The whole of the work is being carried out by local contractors in accordance with plans prepared by the Borough Architect.



**CLEARANCE AREAS and INDIVIDUAL UNFIT HOUSES**  
 Action taken under the Housing and Public Health Acts.  
**RETURN FOR THE PERIOD 1st APRIL 1952 to 31st DECEMBER 1952.**

**PART A—CLEARANCE AREAS (Housing Act 1936)**

	Number of dwelling-houses demolished in the period		Number of persons displaced
	Unfit houses	Other houses	
(1) Land coloured "pink" ...	—	—	—
(2) Land coloured "grey" ...	—	—	—

**PART B—HOUSES NOT INCLUDED IN CLEARANCE AREAS**

	Number of	
	Houses	Persons Displaced
<b>DEMOLITION AND CLOSING ORDERS:</b>		
(1) <b>Housing Act 1936</b>		
(a) Houses demolished as a result of formal or informal procedure under Section 11	—	—
(b) Houses closed in pursuance of an undertaking given by the owners under Section 11 and still in force ...	—	—
(c) Parts of buildings closed (Section 12) ...	—	—
(2) <b>Housing Act 1949</b>		
(a) Closing Orders made under Section 3(1)	—	—
(b) Demolition Orders determined and closing Orders substituted under Section 3(2)	—	—
		Number of houses
<b>REPAIRS:</b>		
<b>INFORMAL ACTION</b>		
(3) Number of unfit or defective houses rendered fit during the period as a result of informal action by the Local Authority under the Public Health or Housing Acts ...		4
<b>ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS</b>		
(4) <b>Public Health Acts.</b>		
Number of houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices		
(a) by owners ...		—
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners ...		—
(5) <b>Housing Act 1936</b>		
Number of houses made fit after service of formal notices (Section 9, 10 and 16)		
(a) by owners ...		—
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners ...		—

## SECTION—E.

### INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

New Byelaws made under Section 15 of the Food and Drugs Act 1938, for the proper sanitary handling, wrapping and delivery of food sold for human consumption, were made by the Borough Council and confirmed by the Ministry of Food and came into operation in February 1952.

All persons dealing in food were personally notified of the provisions of the new Byelaws.

The standard of cleanliness has been well maintained. Particular pride appears to be taken in maintaining a high standard of hygiene in a number of shops.

#### Milk.

Forty-four inspections of cowsheds, dairies and milk shops were made and informal notices were given. The standard of cleanliness continues good and in some cases very good.

The following table shows the number of samples taken during the year and the results obtained:

Grade	Total Samples Taken	Passed	Failed
Non-designated ...	27	24	3
Tuberculin Tested ...	7	6	1
Accredited ...	2	2	—
	—	—	—
Totals ...	36	32	4
	—	—	—

Of all samples taken from 15 producers, 12 had no failures, and similarly from 6 retailers, 5 had no failures during the year.

#### Ice Cream.

Samples of ice cream were taken for bacteriological examination during the year with the following results:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total Taken
26	16	2	1	45

Samples were taken from 12 different producers of which 10 had no failures. From 21 retailers, 18 had no failures.

#### Bakehouses, Meat and Food Shops.

These premises have all been well maintained and most tradesmen take an increasing pride in the cleanliness of their premises.

Inspections were made and informal notices were given in four instances.

#### Food Poisoning.

No notification of food poisoning was received during the year.

#### Meat.

The Tavistock Urban District Council have authorised the inclusion of the following report and table of meat inspection at the Abattoir from whence you derive your meat:

"The town abattoir continues to serve a large area, and dealt with 13,355 animal carcasses during the year, an increase of over 1,600 on the previous year.

All carcasses and offals were inspected before removal from the Abattoir. This important duty entailed 608 visits, many of them out of normal working hours.

Routine visits are made to the Abattoir by the Ministry of Food Area Technical Advisor who has made no adverse comment on the method and efficiency of meat inspection in Tavistock.

The improvements to the overhead track at the Abattoir referred to in my previous report were completed and the electric hoist and carcass splitter were also installed. This has resulted in more rapid and efficient slaughtering and the beef carcasses when dressed have a more presentable appearance.

The number of animals inspected and the carcasses, parts, and organs condemned are set out in the following table:

**Carcasses Inspected and Condemned**

	Cattle, excluding cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed ... (if known)	1753	748	1579	8348	927
Number inspected	1753	748	1579	8348	927
All diseases except tuberculosis :					
Whole carcasses condemned ...	14	28	58	119	21
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	916	391	12	1269	101
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis ...	53.05%	56.02%	4.43%	16.62%	13.16%
Tuberculosis only :					
Whole carcasses condemned ...	6	35	7	—	8
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	69	124	—	—	58
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis ...	4.27%	21.25%	.44%	—	7.11%

#### **Other Foodstuffs.**

Foods have been examined and 73 condemnation certificates have been issued covering in nearly all cases foods which had deteriorated owing to defective containers. Fourteen were for foreign hams weighing 176-lbs.



SECTION—F.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER  
INFECTIOUS DISEASE

The Borough was very fortunate during the year as regards the incidence of infectious disease which was practically non-existent.

The school children were very healthy and apart from trivial disorders the school attendance was not affected by disease.

The following cases of infectious disease were notified by medical practitioners during the year:

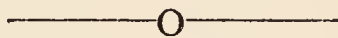
Erysipelas .....	3
Pneumonia .....	1
Puerperal Pyrexia .....	1

DIPHTHERIA: No case of diphtheria was notified during the year.

TUBERCULOSIS: Two new cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis were notified during the year. No deaths were recorded from this cause.

At the end of the year 17 cases of tuberculosis remained on the register as follows:—

Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
Males .....	8	Males .....	2
Females .....	5	Females .....	2



In conclusion I would thank the Mayor and Corporation for the ready hearing my proposals always receive.

I am, Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

E. D. ALLEN-PRICE,

Medical Officer of Health.









